

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 AID-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2207

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, PFOR, UNHCR

SUBJECT: UNHCR MANPOWER REQUIREMENTS IN LAOS

1. RETURN OF REFUGEES TO VILLAGE OF ORIGIN HAS BECOME MAJOR ACTION PROGRAM OF PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNION (PGNU). FOLLOWING AGREEMENT IN JOINT CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ACCORDS (JCCIA) ON PRECEDURE TWO WEEKS AGO, APPROXIMATELY 7,000 PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY BEEN IDENTIFIED BY JOINT MOBILE TEAMS FOR RETURN TO VILLAGE OF ORIGIN IN LAO PATRIOTIC FRONT (LPF) CONTROLLED ZONE. SUBSTANTIAL ADDITIONAL NUMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO REQUEST TO MOVE AND THEIR RESETTLEMENT MUST BE COMPLETED WITHIN TWO MONTHS IN ORDER TO ENABLE THEM TO PLANT RICE BEFORE THE NEXT RAINY SEASON. MANIFESTLY WE ARE FACING A MAJOR TASK.

2. CUENOD AND HAN, THE UNHCR REPRESENTATIVES, HAVE BEEN DOING AN OUTSTANDING JOB OF ESTABLISHING THEMSELVES AND GAINING THE CONFIDENCE OF ALL INTERESTED PARTIES, INCLUDING BOTH SIDES OF THE PGNU AND OURSELVES. CUENOD HAS CONSULTED VERY CLOSELY WITH US AND WE HAVE ASSURED HIM OF OUR ENTIRE COOPERATION, AND NOTABLY THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO CONTINUE DOING THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND TECHNICAL WORK BUT THAT UNHCR SHOULD ASSUME THE MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPERVISING THE RETURN OF THE REFUGEES

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TO THEIR VILLAGES BOTH IN THE LPF ZONE AND WITHIN THE VIENTIANE

SIDE ZONE. GIVEN THE EXTREME ADMINISTRATIVE WEAKNESS OF THE PGNU, VERY LARGE BURDEN WILL DEVOLVE ON UNHCR IF JOB IS TO BE DONE PROPERLY. WE HAVE EMPHASIZED THIS POINT TO CUENOD AND MADE CLEAR THAT IN OUR VIEW HE MUST BUILD UP HIS STAFF SUBSTANTIALLY IF HE IS TO DISCHARGE HIS RESPONSIBILITIES PROPERLY. (HE, HIMSELF, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR REFUGEE PROGRAMS IN BOTH LAOS AND VIETNAM.) WE ARE NOT SURE THAT CUENOD HAS MEASURED FULLY THE PRTLLDW HE FACES. HE HAS ASKED FOR ONLY TWO PROGRAMMERS BUT HIS HEADQUARTERS SEEMS TO BE UNRESPONSIVE EVEN TO THIS VERY MODEST REQUEST. AS A RESULT, CUENOD HAS WELCOMED OUR OFFER TO INTERCEDE ON HIS BEHALF.

3. THEREFORE, WE REQUEST THAT USMISSION GENEVA BE INSTRUCTED TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS TO UNHCR UNDERLINING THE DIMENSION OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES CONFRONTING THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IN LAOS AND URGING UNHCR TO PROVIDE CUENOD WITH AT LEAST THE TWO PROGRAMMERS REQUESTED AND AN ADDITIONAL FIVE FIELD OBSERVER/EXPEDITERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AS WE MENTIONED ABOVE, THE RETURN TO THE VILLAGE THIS YEAR MUST TAKE PLACE IN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS.
WHITEHOUSE

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